

Important Message to Our Lycée Families: Celebrating Our Progress and Building Our Future Together

Chase McLaurin • 5 minutes ago • Friday, Oct 16 at 9:39 AM • **Lycée Français International de la Louisiane District, Primary Campus, LFI, Secondary Campus, LFI**

Dear Lycée Families,

I hope you are enjoying a wonderful Fall Break and that your families are returning refreshed, energized, and ready for the weeks ahead. As we prepare to welcome our students back next week, I want to take a moment to reflect on how far Lycée Français International de la Louisiane has come, celebrate what we are accomplishing together, and share why the continued partnership of our families is so important to our school's future because we need your help.

Lycée is achieving remarkable results, and our greatest strength has always been the people behind those results.

Last year, Lycée earned an A rating from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) for the first time in a decade and achieved its highest ranking among regional schools to date. We were also selected by Louisiana's Board of Elementary & Secondary Education to be the first stop their Bridging Success Tour 2.0 that allowed them to learn about the amazing work happening at LFI to further improve schools around the state. As we approach the release of the 2026 School Performance Scores next month, we anticipate further improvement under the state's more rigorous evaluation system. In addition, U.S. News & World Report recently ranked Lycée among the top 5% of high schools nationwide. These accomplishments reflect the extraordinary commitment of our students, teachers, staff, families, and school leaders. They also affirm something we have always believed: a school can be both academically ambitious and deeply personal, combining high expectations with a community in which every child is known, valued, and supported.

Excellence That Opens Doors for Every Student

Our students are demonstrating what is possible when talented young people are challenged, encouraged, and given the opportunity to thrive. Lycée has Louisiana's highest average ACT score among open-enrollment high schools, at 23.9. We have earned Platinum AP School Honor Roll recognition, and our students outperform state averages in every tested LEAP subject. Equally important is the progress we are making in expanding opportunity and improving outcomes for students from a wide range of backgrounds and with different learning needs.

Over the past four years:

- **African American students' Mastery+ achievement increased from 17% to 41%,** compared with 22% statewide.
- **The percentage of students with disabilities served by Lycée increased from 8% to 12%,**

while their Mastery+ achievement reached 34%, compared with 14% statewide.

- **Overall, our students outperform Louisiana averages in every tested LEAP subject**, in a school community where 62% of students come from low-income households.
- **Outstanding DELF scores show increasing French proficiency** with 92% of 2nd grades passing and 95% of both 10th and 11th graders passing.
- **French High School exams continue to improve** with 92% of Freshman earning passing scores on BREVET and 80% earning the BFI diploma.

These numbers represent much more than rankings and test scores. They represent students discovering their potential, teachers investing in their growth, and families entrusting us with their children's futures. Behind every achievement is a teacher who goes the extra mile, a student who perseveres through a challenge, a family that provides encouragement, and a community that believes in the power of education. We are proud of what our students are accomplishing, and we are equally proud of the people and relationships that make those accomplishments possible.

A Distinctive School, Rooted in Louisiana and Connected to the World

Families choose schools for many different reasons, and we respect the hopes and aspirations each family has for its children. At Lycée, our mission is to help students develop the knowledge, confidence, and skills to pursue their dreams, wherever those dreams may lead. For some students, that journey includes pursuing admission to outstanding selective schools offering a Louisiana diploma, such as Benjamin Franklin High School, ranked Louisiana's No. 1 high school by U.S. News & World Report. Others choose to continue at Lycée, benefiting from our close-knit international school environment, individualized attention, multilingual education, and pathways to national and international postsecondary opportunities with both a Louisiana diploma and international diploma.

We celebrate both journeys. Our success is not defined by a single destination, but by our ability to prepare students to pursue their goals with confidence, curiosity, and purpose. Lycée offers something distinctive in New Orleans: a rigorous international education grounded in French language and culture, Louisiana's rich heritage, and a commitment to preparing students for an increasingly interconnected world. We are a small school with high expectations, where relationships matter and where the whole child matters. During a recent professional development session, our teachers reflected on what makes Lycée special. They spoke about students feeling seen, educators knowing children beyond their own classrooms, and colleagues supporting one another in their shared work. These observations capture the culture we strive to build every day: a school where every student is known, challenged, encouraged, and equipped to succeed.

Our Shared Responsibility for Lycée's Future

As we celebrate our progress, we must also recognize the challenges facing our school and the broader educational community. New Orleans and Louisiana are experiencing demographic pressures and a declining school-age population with New Orleans Public Schools planning to close five or six K-8 schools and three high schools in the near future. School closures and increased competition are changing the educational landscape across our region. Lycée, like other schools, must respond thoughtfully and strategically to these realities. As a Type 2 BESE-approved charter school, Lycée operates independently of the New Orleans Public Schools district's school-closure process. However, we remain affected by the same demographic and enrollment challenges that influence our financial realities and all schools throughout our community.

Enrollment matters, and we need your help because it affects our financial sustainability, our ability to invest in programs and people, and our capacity to continue delivering the exceptional educational experience our students deserve. Sustaining our progress will require us to communicate our strengths clearly, welcome new families, and ensure that more children have the opportunity to experience what Lycée offers.

Last school year, our community came together around this shared priority, and Lycée achieved an overall enrollment increase for the first time since 2021. That progress was encouraging and demonstrated what we can accomplish when we work together. This school year, Lycée Français International de la Louisiane serves 719 students: 683 students in our PK-12 program and 36 Pre-K students participating through our partnership program at Clover.

Although our overall enrollment increased, our enrollment in the MFP-funded program remains below previous levels. Because Pre-K is funded differently from kindergarten through grade 12, the additional Pre-K enrollment has not offset the financial impact of lower MFP student enrollment. Nevertheless, we are proud to remain the only public school in Orleans Parish offering an immersion Pre-K program, particularly at a time when rising operating costs have led other programs to close. Providing young children with an early introduction to language immersion is an important part of our mission and a valuable service to our community.

As we enter our student recruitment season, I ask every Lycée family to help share our story. Tell your friends, neighbors, and colleagues about the teachers who inspire your children, the progress you see in their learning, and the opportunities that make our school special. Invite prospective families to learn more about our programs and experience our community for themselves. It was so inspiring to see so many supportive parents and teachers at our last school board meeting advocating for our school and supporting our school board for the amazing work they have done over the last few years in the face of countless challenges. Working together and focusing on positivity, I know we can overcome any challenge.

Every family who helps another family discover Lycée helps strengthen the future of our school.

Our students, teachers, and leaders deserve for their accomplishments to be known, understood, and celebrated throughout New Orleans.

Transparency, Trust, and Open Communication

We also recognize that public discussion surrounding the school and its labor relations has raised questions for some members of our community. We understand that families need accurate information and confidence in the institution entrusted with their children's education. Following the National Labor Relations Board's determination that Lycée falls outside its jurisdiction, UTNO and its affiliates have continued public advocacy concerning the school, including paid advertising outside our campus and across social media platforms. We dispute several claims made in these campaigns and have communicated factual information and context directly to our families. While we believe this public messaging has contributed to uncertainty among some families, we recognize that enrollment decisions are influenced by many factors, and we cannot attribute every departure to a single cause.

Our responsibility is to listen carefully, respond respectfully, and provide clear, factual information about our school, our decisions, and the educational opportunities we offer. Over the past 18 months, Lycée has produced more than 10,000 records in response to public-records requests, incurring more than \$40,000 in related costs in recent years. The school has worked with legal counsel to respond to these requests and make responsive records available for inspection. Regarding UTNO's petition for a writ of mandamus, the records at issue were made available for inspection on August 28, 2026. To date, the documents have not been examined. I first learned of the lawsuit through media coverage several weeks ago, and, as of the date of this letter, neither the school nor I has been served. We remain committed to meeting our legal obligations, providing access to public records in accordance with applicable requirements, and communicating with families in a responsible and transparent manner. Our focus remains on ensuring that public discussion does not overshadow the educational mission and student achievements that define Lycée.

A Community Worth Investing In

I also want to recognize our families for the partnership and responsibility you demonstrate in the everyday operations of our school. Your timely payments for lunch services, before- and aftercare, and Pre-K tuition help us manage our resources responsibly, limit unnecessary administrative costs, and direct more of our attention and resources toward students. Thank you for your continued cooperation and support.

After four years at Lycée, I remain deeply grateful for everything I have learned from our families, teachers, staff, and community partners. Their commitment has strengthened my belief in what this school can accomplish and in the importance of preserving its distinctive place in New Orleans. I am a fourth-generation Louisiana educator. Serving the children of this state is not simply my profession; it is part of my family's history and a responsibility I carry with great pride. My great-grandmother was a

lifelong educator who spoke French and taught in public and private schools throughout southeastern Louisiana, including Orleans Parish. As I reflected on our work during this Fall Break, I found myself thinking about her and imagining how proud she would be to see the work happening at Lycée today. I believe she would recognize the same enduring values: the power of education, the importance of language and culture, and the responsibility to help every child discover and develop their potential regardless of their background.

Lycée's identity is deeply rooted in New Orleans and Louisiana's French heritage. Honoring that legacy also means ensuring that our school continues to grow, evolve, and welcome new generations of families into our community. We must preserve what makes Lycée distinctive while ensuring that every family who joins us feels valued, included, and connected to our shared mission. The progress we have made demonstrates what is possible when a community believes in its students and works together toward a common purpose. Our achievements are significant, but they are not the finish line. They are a foundation on which we can continue to build.

As we look ahead, I remain committed to supporting our teachers, strengthening student achievement, expanding opportunity, and earning the trust of the community we serve. With your partnership, we can build on our momentum, welcome more families into our school, and ensure that Lycée continues to offer an exceptional public education for generations to come. Thank you for believing in our students, supporting our educators, and being part of the Lycée family. I look forward to welcoming everyone back next week and continuing this important work together.

Je vous remercie pour votre engagement et votre soutien envers notre communauté scolaire.

Dr. McLaurin

Superintendent

PS: *Please join me in welcoming Mr. Mbeh's wife and five daughters to LFI. His three oldest will be joining us as students while he will be meeting his youngest for the first time this month. Mr. Mbeh arrived at our school last year in October and despite a late start produced the highest academic gains on LEAP of any teacher at our school with 75% Mastery+ Social Studies along with record high 5th grade DELF scores with his partner teacher, Mr. Brohon. He was also recognized by Teach NOLA for his excellence in teaching during his very first year. We are so excited to have his entire family with us and grateful to the major personal sacrifices that many of the amazing educators at LFI make every day to best serve our students.*